

Arms of Old Japan

Magnificent Collection of Obsolete Weapons and Armor on Exhibition at London, Eng.

It was early in 1902 that the Japan society, now counting 1,259 members and presided over by Viscount Haya-shi, Japanese minister to the court of St. James, had a relatively modest origin in London. Their object, as defined by their statutes, was nothing if not comprehensive. It included the encouragement of the study of the Japanese language, literature, history and folklore of Japanese art, science and industries of the social life and economic condition of the Japanese people, past and present, and of all Japanese matters. In fact, one must suppose that nobody has ever hungered more to learn so much about Japan.

Among the chosen means of furthering these fervent aspirations were meetings, transactions and loan exhibitions. "The Arms and Armor of Old Japan" is the subject selected for the first exhibition of the Japan society, and a highly interesting show it is. Either displayed in cases or hung upon the walls, at the galleries of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colors, there must be at least 1,500 objects and illustrations of warfare.

The greatest part dates from the fourth and last evolutionary period of old Japanese armor, beginning with the Tokugawa Shogunate, 1603, and ending in 1871, when the wearing of arms was abolished. If prehistoric times there are bronze arrow-heads, probably dating from about 400 B. C., but I did not notice anything to represent specially that first evolutionary period which commenced in 200 A. D., when the fleets of Japan, commanded by the valorous Queen Jingu, sailed westward to Korea, and "made the arms of Japan shine beyond the sea."

Sword Decorations.

For centuries the best work of the most famous artists in metal was devoted merely to the decoration of the sword, and now, in the present-day catalogue, three out of seven introductory articles are devoted to the sword and its decorations. The swordsmiths

a religious act of no slight import. Was it the spirit of the master or of his tutelary deity that cast such a spell over our sword? Perfect as a work of art, setting at defiance its Toledo and Damascus rivals, there was more than art could impart. Its cold blade, collecting on its surface, the moment it is drawn, the vapors of the atmosphere; its immaculate texture flashing light of bluish hue; its matchless edge, upon which histories and possibilities hang; the curve of its back, uniting exquisite grace with utmost strength—all these fill us with mixed feelings of power and beauty, of awe and terror.

Pleasant it is, indeed, to meet with such enthusiasm—yet, perhaps, the untutored western reader will consider the marvelous quality of a Japanese sword blade due to the swordsmith's art and science rather than to his purity and prayer. These blades were forged from soft elastic iron combined with steel, or from two or three grades of steel; and various methods were employed for their combination one of the best being to weld together two strips, one of iron and the other of steel. This compound strip was then folded on itself, welded together and drawn out to the original length, when it was again folded, welded and drawn out as before. Extreme care was taken to insure each weld being perfect, and the process was repeated until the billet from which the blade was forged contained many thousands of alternate layers of differing metal.

The forging completed, the blade was scraped and filed all over and minutely examined. If the smith was satisfied with it he proceeded to the next and most important operation, the formation of the yakiba, or hardened edge, which appears as a band of pearly luster along the edge. The blade was covered with a mixture of clay, sand and charcoal, and when partly dry the covering was cut through on both sides in the particular outline desired along and near the edge. This part of the coating was

size and fineness were used, but never a circular revolving stone. The blade was either rubbed on them, or with them, held in the hand, and finally the back and the two flat sides of each face of the blade next the back were burnished with a steel burnishing needle.

The principle of using a hardened edge while the body of the blade remains comparatively soft is the most characteristic of the Japanese swords. They are essentially cutting weapons and the smith's object was to produce a sword with a very hard, keen and durable edge, while at the same time avoiding all danger of breakage, however hard a blow might be struck. The western swords are made equally hard all over, but of a limited hardness. If they were made as hard all



Voluntary Hari-Kari.

over as the edge of the Japanese sword they would be so brittle as to break the first hard blow.

The Japanese swords are divided into two great classes called Koto and Shinto, meaning old and new sword, respectively; that is, produced before or after the year 1603. The Taiko Tokotomi Hideyoshi is responsible for this division and in his time flourished Honami Kosetow, the first sword expert, whose judgment was accepted as infallible. His position of official sword expert has been held by the same Honami family down to the present time. The most famous swordsmith of Japan was Masamune, and in the exhibition of one of the finest of several fine blades, lent by Mr. Dobree, is certified by a Honami expert to be by this great swordsmith Masamune—Goro Ruydo Masamune of Shosha, who lived from 1264 till 1344. Before 1871 a blade of this kind would have been priceless. It is still one of the greatest treasures a collector can desire.—Boston Transcript.

Put Rembrandt in the Shade.

Dudley Hardy, London's artist, says he admires American art and likes some American artists—but not all. When asked to say more than this he tells a story to show which kind he does not like. Here it is:

"It was at Etaples, and there were two of them at the table next mine—two quite pretty girls, they were—and they talked Art at the top of their voices. First it was Titian. He failed to find approval for anything. Then it was Velasquez. He was worse than Titian, if possible. Then it was Rembrandt, and for a moment I thought he was going to be endorsed. But it was only partial.

"Rembrandt's all slick enough sometimes," admitted one of the ladies, 'but you jes' ought to see the juicy sketch I did this mornin'!" "I swallowed my soup the wrong way and fled," adds Mr. Hardy.

Had a Good Rest.

De Style—Did it do any good to send your wife and eight children to the mountains this summer?

Consume—Oh, yes, I feel fine.

Lace-Making Irish Girls.

Four little Irish colleens, straight from County Roscommon, and with the flush of health and beauty on their cheeks and the brightness in their blue and gray eyes which only country lassies from the Emerald Isle possess, came to New York on the Baltic Thursday to show New York girls and women how to make the priceless Irish crochet lace which adorns their gowns.

They were Annie O'Daly, Kate Kill-duff, Kate Burke and Katherine Kenny, and were in charge of two sweet-faced sisters of the order of Franciscan Sisters of Mary—Sisters Bridget and Columba, says the New York American. The little girls are students in the Doughlynn School of Industries at Castlerea, County Roscommon, and are such expert lace makers that they were chosen to represent the school at the Irish Industrial Show in this city.

Bread-Fruit for Use.

Consul Anderson of Hangchow thinks the pomelo or Chinese bread-fruit would do well in this country. The fruit is grown in the United States by a few persons, but not commercially. For-eigners agree in declaring that the pomelo or Chinese bread-fruit would East. It combines the good points of the orange with the good points of the grape-fruit.

The Chinese say that a good-sized tree will ordinarily produce from 600 to 700 pomeloes. When it is considered that many pomeloes will run as large as seven or eight inches in diameter and even larger, it will be appreciated that such a tree is bearing a load. The fruit is more oval than round. Its color and appearance are those of grape-fruit.

Best in the World.

Cream, Ark., Oct. 9th.—(Special).—After eighteen months suffering from Epilepsy, Backache and Kidney Complaint, Mr. W. H. Smith of this place is a well man again and those who have watched his return to health unhesitatingly give all the credit to Dodd's Kidney Pills. In an interview regarding his cure, Mr. Smith says:

"I had been low for eighteen months with my back and kidneys and also Epilepsy. I had taken everything I knew of and nothing seemed to do me any good till a friend of mine got me to send for Dodd's Kidney Pills. I find that they are the greatest medicine in the world, for now I am able to work and am in fact as stout and strong as before I took sick."

Dodd's Kidney Pills cure the Kidneys. Cured Kidneys cleanse the blood of all impurities. Pure blood means good health.

Value of the Weather Man.

In spite of the standing jokes about the weather man, it is probable that for every dollar spent on the weather bureau \$10 are saved, says Country Life in America. At the time of the Mississippi flood of 1897 \$15,000,000 worth of live stock and other property was saved as a result of warnings issued a week ahead. Signals displayed for a single hurricane have detained in port vessels valued, with their cargoes, at \$20,000,000. The West Indian stations, established in 1898, inform us of hurricanes as soon as they begin. The course of the hurricane that caused the Galveston flood was charted for a week before it struck our shores—for hurricanes move slowly. Eighty-five per cent. of the forecasts now come true, and by the aid of rural free delivery 25,000,000 forecast cards were distributed last year to farmers, many of whom could not have had them five years ago.

A Profitable Purchase.

The purchase price of Alaska was \$7,250,000, and it has been estimated that the money which its furs, fisheries and mines have returned to the people of the United States since its purchase is in excess of \$10,000,000,000.

Strange as it may seem, an abundance of grasshoppers does not add to the value of the hop crop.

Most of us can offer a sure remedy for other people's ills.



As the Armored Warriors Fought.

of Japan held, of course, a very honorable position. They were not looked upon as artists, and the forging of a blade was a semi-religious ceremony which required considerable preparation. As a condition of success the smith had to live a moral life and abstain from all excesses.

Of the swordsmith, Prof. Inazo Nitobe writes: "Belli he commenced his craft with prayer and purification, or, as the saying was, he committed his soul and spirit into the forging and tempering of the steel. Every swing of the hammers and plunge into water were dictated by the gods."

removed, leaving only the narrow margin and the edge exposed, and the blade, held edge downward, was passed to and fro in the fire until the exposed portion reached the proper temperature when it was plunged into water. The outline of the hardened edge thus formed is a characterization of different smiths and schools of forging. There are three or four recognized principal classes of outline, with some subdivisions.

How Blade Was Made.

For grinding, finishing and sharpening a series of stones of graduated